

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target for gate electrode material ~~containing~~ consisting essentially of 0.5 to 10at% of tantalum and residual with the balance being nickel.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target for gate electrode material ~~containing~~ consisting essentially of 1 to 5at% of tantalum and residual with the balance being nickel.

Claims 3-10 (canceled).

Claim 11 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein inevitable impurities in the target, excluding gas components, are 100wtppm or less.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein inevitable impurities in the target, excluding gas components, are 10wtppm or less.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein oxygen content in the target is 50wtppm or less, and wherein nitrogen, hydrogen and carbon contents in the target are each 10wtppm or less.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein oxygen content in the target is 10wtppm or less.

Claim 15 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein an initial magnetic permeability of in-plane direction of the target is 50 or more.

Claim 16 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein a maximum magnetic permeability on an initial magnetization curve of in-plane direction of the target is 100 or more.

Claim 17 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein an average crystal grain size of the target is 80 μ m or less.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 2, wherein inevitable impurities in the target, excluding gas components, are 100wtppm or less.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 2, wherein inevitable impurities in the target, excluding gas components, are 10wtppm or less.

Claim 20 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 19, wherein oxygen content in the target is 50wtppm or less, and wherein nitrogen, hydrogen and carbon contents in the target are each 10wtppm or less.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 20, wherein oxygen content in the target is 10wtppm or less.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 21, wherein an initial magnetic permeability of in-plane direction of the target is 50 or more.

Claim 23 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 22, wherein a maximum magnetic permeability on an initial magnetization curve of in-plane direction of the target is 100 or more.

Claim 24 (previously presented): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 23, wherein an average crystal grain size of the target is 80 μ m or less.

Claims 25-28 (canceled).

Claim 29 (new): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 24, wherein a content of Fe in said sputtering target is no greater than 1 wtppm.

Claim 30 (new): A nickel-tantalum alloy sputtering target according to claim 1, wherein a content of Fe in said sputtering target is no greater than 1 wtppm.